

# ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SCHOOLING AT STEWART ISLAND

1874—1974





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Published by the Stewart Island School Centennial Committee  
and printed by Craig Printing Co Ltd., Invercargill.  
63060 August 1974.

## PREFACE

When we began to prepare a celebration suitable to mark the end of the first hundred years of formal education we thought that a year would give us ample time and at that time no thought had been given to the publication of any historical record. The idea which has now culminated in the publication of this booklet came because of the enormous amount of pictorial history which was assembled for public display from so many sources, and it became quite evident that this historical material should be preserved and at the same time made available to all. We were very fortunate in having the willing co-operation of Mrs Olga Sansom, herself an ex pupil of the Halfmoon Bay School, whose wealth of knowledge and keen interest in the history of Stewart Island, together with her well known ability with her pen, made this task possible. Olga set to work with desperately short notice with a will so typical of her and so this little booklet became possible. My Committee is most grateful too for the assistance given by Mrs Eileen Willa, Curator of the Rakiura Museum, and to all those kind people who made so much pictorial material available. Special mention should also be made here of the monumental task undertaken by Mrs Netta Rawle who identified every person in the photographs reproduced and gave us the captions which give these pictures such real value.





**1870's FIRST SCHOOL ON ROAD**



**1884-85 SECOND SCHOOL BUILT  
AND "OLD SCHOOL" ALONGSIDE**



## CENTENARY OF THE STEWART ISLAND SCHOOLS 1974

The Centenary of the Stewart Island Schools in 1974 is of New Zealand significance. Its pupils have spread far and wide although many of the earliest names still survive here and at the Bluff. This third island of New Zealand, furthest South, is in Maori Lore, Rakiura or Land of the Heavenly Glows. An older name is The Anchor of the Canoe of Maui.

The South Island was the canoe, the North Island the fish, Te Ika a Maui, but a boat without an anchor is in for trouble. This "anchor" is a solid mass of granite best seen in the stark granite cores, Gog and Magog at Pegasus.

Geologically too part of Stewart Island, with some of Southland's Sou'west land, is the oldest rock in New Zealand. One of its earliest settlers used to call the Island The Old Rock, but that was only because it reminded him of his home land, and to cheer him up when he was home-sick.

### EARLY EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND LAGGED BEHIND

In the early 70's only a little more than half the children in New Zealand from five to fifteen years, were on the school rolls. Attendances were around 40%. In this respect education in New Zealand lagged behind that of Australia.

Since Stewart Island was always considered to be a remote area "near the South Pole" and fit only for the destruction of seals and whales, it is to the credit of its pioneers that two schools opened their doors there in 1874 and 1875. (The Ruapuke School opened in 1868).

At Halfmoon Bay it was entirely due to the sheer persistence of the settlers aided by the Southern Press. They badgered the Otago Education Board for a teacher, and not only a teacher "We beg you to send us the very best teacher you can spare".

Mr William Peterson was appointed by the Otago Education Board. He stepped ashore from the Rosa Cutter. Their dreams had come true. "Here is a real teacher".

Where are the hundred lighted celebration candles? In our memories no doubt. Our Island breezes would blow them out

School opened in April 1874 in the home of Tom Leask, Leask's Bay. Mr and Mrs Peterson and their two children lived in a cottage at Lonneker's Bay, provided by the Lonnekers, and "the Dom", as he was nicknamed from the start, went from house to house to teach his pupils.

For the first five months his salary was paid by the parents, and as promised, they themselves built the school. It cost \$80. Details

MINUTES OF FIRST MEETING  
OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE, JULY 9th, 1874

July 9th 1874.

A meeting of Inhabitants at Halfmoon Bay was held in Chas. Leask's at 6 P.M. the business of the meeting were as follows, viz.

William Peterson elected clerk of Committee.

Robert Scollay elected member of do.

John Lottit do do do.

Mannasseh do do do.

George Priest do do do.

Harry West do do do.

John Lottit do Chairman do.

The meeting authorised the clerk to order 4500 shingles from Duncan Collier to be delivered at the school House at 20¢ per 1000. within three or four days from this date, or as soon as required; also to order from the Sawmill any wood that may be required for Partition Chimneys &c; also to order from the Rev. Mr. Stobo Inverscargill Books Slates &c required the school. and to write to Mr. Stock and ask him if he is willing to implement his promise to some of the Inhabitants that he would give the whole of the wood required for the school and give him an account of the wood received.



MINUTES OF SECOND MEETING  
OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE, JULY 27th, 1874

July 24<sup>th</sup> 1874.

A meeting of School Committee was held, in the School room, at 6 P. M.

The meeting unanimously agreed to refuse Mr. Dyer the use of the School room for his Soiree on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> Inst. but that he can have the School room on Sunday and on all occasions for religious purposes except during school hours.

The meeting also resolved, to have an opening service on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August. and authorized the clerk to employ Inmanasah, to put in the windows, and chimney to be sorted, and any thing requiring to be done.

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of this may be read in the minute book of that year. The timber was from Stock's Water Mill (at the Old Mill Creek) and Duncan Collie supplied the shingles, 4,500 at \$2 a 1,000. So there was the roof for \$9. Shingles were the usual roofing material and if properly laid they were durable.

Books, slates and pencils were given by the Southland Presbytery, from the Rev. A. H. Stobo of Invercargill. The personnel of the first School Committee is appended.

#### FEES: THE FOURTH CHILD TO BE FREE

There was no free tuition, let alone free books. Little wonder that books were prized in those days. There were no blandishments to learning. But the fees were not heavy: half a dollar a quarter for reading, seventy five cents for reading, writing and arithmetic, and one dollar, the maximum, for the addition of geography and grammar.

For the third child in a family it was half-fees; the fourth was free. The big family was encouraged in those days. Quite a few parents responded.

#### OPENING SOIREE 5 AUGUST, 1874

At the opening soiree on the 5th of August, 1874 "the whole island turned out". The school room was partitioned off so that the teacher and his family could live in it. This they did until the Teacher's House, Myrtle Cottage (and still standing) was ready in 1875.

#### THE OLD SCHOOL'S VERSATILITY

The first school, The Old School, became the meeting place of the people. Especially was it remembered for the dances held in it, particularly wedding dances, when a hundred dancers could make the floor bounce. It was the Court House, the Morgue when necessary, the sample room and shop for Mr Yule, a visiting draper. Church services were held in it, teeth were extracted there by Mr Sam Deck, and now and again a tailor came to measure the men who could afford new suits. "Men have fits here" one school boy chalked up on the door. But Mr Peterson's sharp eye and willing taws soon had him scrub that off.





## **MANASSEH WALSCHLAGER**

With **BOB SCOLLAY** and **TOM LEASK** he built the first School.

He was a member of the First School Committee, Halfmoon Bay in 1874.



## **GEORGE PRIEST (CAPTAIN)**

Member of First School Committee, Halfmoon Bay School, 1874

## THE FIRST PUPILS

The names of the first pupils, twenty in number on the 1874 roll are appended. They were of all ages, for some had been taught by their parents, some briefly at the "Private Schools". Notice though how the names have survived. Once an Islander, always an Islander.

Sarah was eighteen, Jane was sixteen, Dan was twelve and Tom was eight. One name is a dignified "Miss Oak". She was said to be old enough to have long skirts and her hair up. Bob Oak, her brother maybe, married a Simon from Simon's Bay (called Deadman's Bay). Mrs Simon was Katerina whose old home site is a land mark above Braggs Bay when the white marguerites from her old garden are in flower.

Jane, Caroline and Kitty, the three McLean sisters were always called Jin, Lin and Tot. Their father was manager of Stock's Mill and they lived at the Old Mill Creek, where a little settlement had sprung up round the mill.

It's a long time ago, but descendants of these first pupils are all about us.

Eighteen year old Sarah married Tom a son of Captain Paddy Gilroy, that stalwart old seaman of long ago; Jane married Captain George Williamson, who was drowned in 1900 when the Wolverine, said to be the first oil-powered vessel in New Zealand was lost with all hands. Dan was skipper of the Enterprise, and drowned when the Patience was swamped on her way from Port Adventure. He was coming up to Halfmoon Bay to see his new-born baby daughter. And Tom never married.

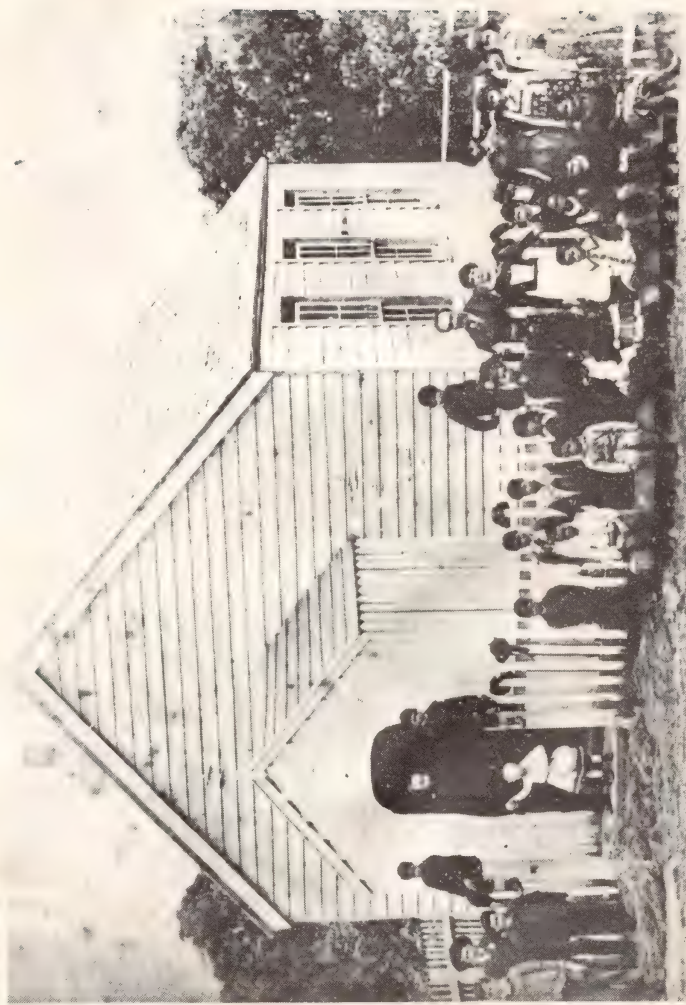
But where is Miss Oak? Her's is the one name we cannot trace. Was Bob Oak an Englishman with a coined name? Perhaps it was Oke. And were there any little acorns to carry on the family tree?

## THE OLD SCHOOL SURVIVED ITS TROUBLES

In 1877 James Hay surveyed "The Township of Oban". In the plan, the front street, curving the beach, and named Elgin Terrace, was drawn right through the school. When the road was formed it was apparent that the school could not remain on it. The parents were annoyed, and even more irked by the pretentious name Elgin Terrace.

That same year George Hilliar, father of a big family at Horse Shoe Bay had a plan. If the school had to be moved, he moved (How these verbs be devil us!) at a Committee Meeting "that it be advisable to remove the Halfmoon Bay School to a position that would serve both Horse Shoe and Halfmoon children". The terse following comment reads "strongly opposed".





## SCHOOL CHILDREN AT THE NECK SCHOOL 1875-1888

TAKEN PROBABLY IN EARLY 80's

On Fence (Left to Right): Barney Buller, Jacob Newton, Harry Rita, Tom Bragg

Standing (Left to Right): Walla Joss, Walter Joss, Oui-Oui Chevalier

In Doorway: Mr. A. W. Traill (Teacher), Fred Traill (holding his father's hand), John Newton, Annie Newton, Sarah King, Rose Clark, Tom Lee, Dolly Ashwell, Mr Pope (Inspector), Mary Moses, Joe Joss, Ellen Moses, Kitty Clark, Hannah Goomes

Sitting (Left to Right): Bob Wilson, George Fife, Jenny Sherburd, Dodo Newton, Joshua (Nichol) Brown, Mark Joss (The 1st), Sarah Smith

(Names from BOB POTIKI for Rakiura Museum)

It was the mud that was the trouble, as of old. George said he thought he had lost one of his children in the mud on the so-called "track" but he hadn't counted them lately.

#### SOUTHLAND EDUCATION BOARD 1878 IN CONTROL

In 1878 education control passed from the Otago to the Southland Education Board and in July 1884 the Committee applied for a new school, and it was granted.

A Government site on the hill (towards Golden Bay) had been set aside, but it was not considered suitable. Mr Peterson insisted that the new school be kept in the township. The committee wrote to the Education Board and recommended that they purchase for a school site Section 5 Block 1 Township of Oban.

#### NEW SCHOOL BUILT

The new school was built in 1884-85 a little further back and along from the old school. The old-timer was shifted on rollers and placed alongside. The three men who shifted it were Bob Scollay and Tom Leask, both well used to launching boats and Manasseh Walschlager the man who had built it.

#### OBAN LIBRARY OPENS, 1885

In 1885 the Oban Library was set up in the new school, \$160 worth of books. Members paid \$1 a year and 5 cents a fortnight, non-members half a dollar a quarter and 5 cents a book. The members had given initial donations from which a Government subsidy was obtainable.

And the books? The hand of a scholar is apparent in the selection - Mr Peterson's. Some of these books are still stored in the Halfmoon Bay Library.

#### 1893, FIRST MEETING OF STEWART ISLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

On 14th January, 1893 the first meeting of the newly formed Stewart Island County Council met in the School House with the following personnel:

Joseph Harrison, Chairman; George Naismith, Treasurer; William Robertson; Angus Livingstone; Walter Joss and Arthur W. Traill.

Walter Robertson was appointed County Clerk, a position he retained for thirty-seven years.



## "OUR SCHOOL"

This was "our school" no distance from the edge of the beach - a beach which in our day used to have long coils of black sawdust flung up on it, warm to the bare feet. All along the sawdust were strung out hundreds of "shinies" gay little shells like jewels, which we eagerly collected.

## LUNCH TIME

We stood at the porch-door at lunch time. We gossiped, we munched and we fed the waiting sea-gulls.

A white heron sat immovable on an old post, woodhens turned over the kelp with purposeful bills. A sudden flash of gay feathers as fantails came about. They danced above the old seaweed, their tails tilted lightly back over their heads. Our love of nature was born then, never to die.

## OPENING ROLL OF HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL 1874 (20 pupils)

William Peterson, teacher

Sarah West	Kitty McLean	Jim Leask	Dan West
Jane Scollay	Caroline McLean	Bob Owen	Dan Scollay
Kitty Scollay	Eliza Bowers	Joe Moss	Fred Lonneker
Maggie Scollay	Annie Peterson	Joe Harrold	Jack Lonneker
Jane McLean	Miss Oak	Tom Leask	Jim West

## FIRST SCHOOL COMMITTEE: HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL 9TH JUNE 1874

William Peterson	-	Clerk of Committee
John Louttit	-	Chairman
Manasseh Walschlager		
George Priest		
Harry West		
Robert Scollay		

## POLICEMAN, SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, STOREKEEPER

Constable Angus Livingstone was first policeman from 1877 - 1889 - a "half-time policeman". As there was no living in it he opened a store (and sold butcher's meat also) on the site where Bragg's store (or part of it) now stands. He was also Chairman of the School Committee (Halfmoon Bay School) from 1877 - 1889.

When he died soon after his retirement from the Police Force at the Island, the whole community is said to have "turned out" to the funeral of the tall well-liked Australian.



**JOHN LOUTTIT**

(CAPTAIN)

Chairman of First School Committee, Halfmoon Bay School, 1874. He was drowned in Halfmoon Bay not long after.



**CHARLES MCLAURIN**

First Storekeeper and Postmaster in Halfmoon Bay, September 1st, 1872.

In 1873 he set up a School in his Store at Halfmoon Bay. A Shipwright, he built the "Mary Brilliard".



## THE FORERUNNERS — THE SMALL PRIVATE SCHOOLS

### CHARLES McLAURIN'S SCHOOL

It was 1873 and there were school age children in nearly every home and more coming.

Fishermen were busy, cutters were on the move, boats were being built and launched from several slip ways. There was talk of a sawmill starting at the head of the Bay. This was when the parents began to be edgy. "These children are running wild. We must have a school". Most youngsters were taught their A.B.C. and could count on their fingers, but "a school is what we need".

The store-keeper (the first in Halfmoon Bay) agreed with them. He offered to help. He said he would clear a small room in the shop and do a spot of teaching. His store was also the Post Office opened on 1st September, 1872 but he declined to handle the letters. That didn't matter. The settlers thumbed through the mail, when a cutter arrived and "dropped" it, and took their own.

Charles McLaurin was a shipwright, a Scotsman lately from Canada. He had built a 13 ton cutter the Mary Brilliard on the Bay Beach and was busy enough. On the morning when school was set to open, only one boy arrived scrubbed and dressed in his Sunday clothes. But eventually the school got started, for seven year old Tom Leask remembered the butter-pats they used for books. Off cuts of timber from the Kaipipi sawmill were so shaped by the teacher. Burnt in were letters, words and short sentences. "He did drawings too that made us laugh". The teacher also gave out the occasional lolly or sweetie. "But they were hard won" said Tom.

### MRS DYER'S SCHOOL

Mr and Mrs Dyer who lived briefly at the Island are described as "a very pious pair".

At Lonneker's Bay Mrs Dyer had a small school. She taught reading, writing and kneeling, and sewing for the girls, for a short time. They lived in the Lonneker cottage which soon after became Mr Peterson's, the first state teacher's home.

### THE TWO HORSE SHOE BAY SCHOOLS

At Horse Shoe Bay there were two private schools, rivals at that. It was 1876 and the roads were too bad for the children to attend the Halfmoon Bay school. There was a shop too at Horse Shoe Bay and the mill was working.



### HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL 1892

Back Row: Katie Kihau, Jinnie Lonneker, Rosa Leask, Elsie Swain, Hannah Pollock, Bessie Kihau, Annabel Harrison, Ettie Goodall, Miss Robina Peterson, Edwin Harrison (in fern), Bill Thomson, Jack Bragg, Charlie Swain, Albert Leask, Harry Thomson  
 Middle Row: Violet Thomson, Emily Thomson, Polly Jones, Jessie Cox, Lizzie Pollock, Clara Harrison  
 Front Row: Polly Naismith, Edie Harrison, Katie Thomson, Mr. Peterson, Albert Jones, Jim Thomson, George Swain, Nay Bragg, Fred Goodall, Arthur Traill, Edwin Traill



So Mrs Denton said to her neighbour "You sew for me and I'll teach your children". Soon other children joined the "school". The parents paid by gifts of butter, eggs, vegetables and fish, and it worked. The "Little Woman" was popular.

Then Dr and Mrs Lightburn came to live at Horse Shoe Bay "for the Doctor's health". The Doctor set up a small dispensary, but no patients arrived. No-one was sick.

"Try teaching", someone said. He did so, charging 10 cents per week for each child. The children's only memories of this "medical-school" were of the pranks they got up to when the Doctor was out of the room. They mixed up the pills in the various bottles, and that is perhaps why the Doctor and his wife soon left the Island. "He was very healthy when he went away" Cissie, one of the pupils, used to say.

Mud or no mud, it wasn't long before the Horse Shoe Bay parents were sending their children to the Halfmoon Bay school to get the benefit of the Dom's excellent teaching.

It must have been from that mud that our parents got the names they called us. We were never lightly praised. In fact we were never praised. You always had to do "better than that".

"Come on. Get going stick-in-the-mud!" or "wake up, stick-in-the-ashes" when we were sitting too close to the fire. It hasn't left us with any sense of injustice done.



**Mr and Mrs WILLIAM PETERSON (First School Teacher)**  
With Miss Annie Peterson seated and Miss Robina Peterson standing



## WILLIAM PETERSON, FIRST TEACHER "DOM" 1874 - 1906

Thirty two years teaching, twenty three of them as Postmaster on an island in a pioneer community. How did he last?

At his retirement in 1906, in a press report, a parent stated "Not one of those pupils who passed through his hands will allow a word to be said against him". That was their tribute.

In 1875 another parent, writing to the press, said "He favours no-one's children and enters into no individual quarrels. He was never absented himself one day from the duties of the school, nor one Sabbath from the Sabbath school which he began".

William Peterson, born 1840, a Shetland Islander and educated at Edinburgh University arrived in New Zealand with his wife Elizabeth and two children in the City of Dunedin in 1873. Ship-mates were some fishermen bound for Stewart Island.

After a few weeks working in the Otago Education Board Office in Dunedin under Dr Hislop and Mr Pryde he was told that a teacher was urgently needed at Stewart Island. Remembering his fishermen shipmates he said "I jumped at the chance to go there".

Early in 1874, from the Rosa Cutter, Captain Walter Traill, the family arrived at Stewart Island. Almost at once he began teaching, in the homes of the people until the school was built later in the year. (August 1874)

It was a sole school, though later on in years his daughter Annie assisted, and Ettie Goodall (Mrs Jack Ramsay) taught the girls sewing.

"The Dom" as he was called was always the Boss, but a kindly boss. He was teacher, preacher, postmaster; he built his own house, Myrtle Cottage (1875). It may still be seen at Stewart Island. He cleared the land, planted trees, made a croquet lawn; he was stubborn in debate and he demanded perfect work from his pupils. A letter written when he was 81 by one of those first day pupils (Tom Leask) is appended.

In the corner of the school room was a loaded gun. He had authority to shoot at the legs of run-away sailors, but he was never known to use it. He would use the taws though and "Holla Hon!" meant "Hold out your hand"; and many found themselves reluctantly doing it. But he was a humane man and his pupils knew where they stood. More than that, he did not sink into desuetude on an isolated island. He kept the school and the Island in the public eye, in some very attractive writing to the press of his day.

It may surprise you to know that he was a cripple. He had been born severely crippled, a hunch back, but he never owned it and no-one seemed to notice it. He was always well dressed in "town clothes".



### **BOAT BUILDING IN EARLY DAYS**

**SCHOOL** Back Left with **CAPTAIN BOB SCOLLAY**, A MEMBER OF THE FIRST (1874) **SCHOOL COMMITTEE** and the first settler 1865 on the site of the present Township. Like other Island boat builders of early times he "did the lot" — planned, designed, built, was blacksmith and sailmaker and with help, bossed the launching.



### **ANGUS LIVINGSTONE**

First Policeman ("Half-Time") 1877-1889,  
Storekeeper and Butcher,  
Chairman of School Committee (Halfmoon Bay) 1877-1889



Of their family of three girls Bessie died when 15, and Annie and Robina lived their lives in what Robina called "our beloved island-home". Both left diaries written in beautiful copper-plate, with sketches in the margins. Stewart Island school children of those years had their own Adventure Schools. One entry in Robina's diary reads: "We spent five days, all of Easter, on the Rosa Cutter, windbound at Ruapuke. Oh! that old boat. We arrived in Bluff just in time to buy some cold cross buns." "After the death of her father Robina was Post Mistress for sixteen years, 1909-25.

Before Robina died she gave me her father's papers and the diaries. "Dear Father", she said, "He never seemed to be tired".

I gratefully acknowledge the value of these early documents. They have given me information that can be shared at this centenary of the school; a deep affection for the island people and many rousing memories.

## LETTER FROM TOM LEASK

(A First Day Pupil 1874) to his niece Mrs Olga Sansom on the death of "Tama", his dog.  
Written when he was 81 years.

20/3/47

Dear Olga

Not everyone would mourn  
the death of a dog. Thanks for  
your wire & letter expressing your  
regret at Tama's passing. You say  
he had some of the finest human  
qualities. he certainly had for he  
was so human, so melting

Impossible for me to believe  
he had not a soul. He went  
in the hedge to die & found  
him & carrying him home he died  
in my arms. He had I think  
been trying all day (he had been up  
to the City with me) to let me know  
he was ill. Had I known what  
was the matter I could have saved  
him "at well" he has gone, some  
would say for ever for he was only  
a common dog. I miss him  
& so does him she keeps



walking around & around the house  
& seems very unsettled but  
like yours truly will get over it  
in time. Yes the days are nice  
& yes the Oregon fly is very beautiful  
I have not seen one for quite an age  
I will have a look at those Juaninos  
ships of yours tomorrow all being well  
& give them a good watering. would  
have done it without being asked. had  
I thought of it. I am trying to catch  
up a bit on my writing  
so them  
Yours

I read once that money will buy a dog  
but not the love of his tail.

## STANDARD VI.

THIS is to certify that *Thomas Bragg*  
passed the **SIXTH** Public School Standard,  
at *The Neck (Stewart Island)* Native School,  
on the *tenth* day of *October*, 1890

*James H. Pipes,*  
Inspector.



**ADAM HAMILTON**

At Picnics — we ran when he said "Go".



## THE NECK, PATERSON INLET

At the Eastern Seaward end of Paterson Inlet lies a high peninsula linked to the main bulk of Stewart Island by a narrow sandy isthmus. It looks today like a smooth green cultivated island, but it is deserted now except for sheep and cattle. Once it was a lively settlement, The Neck. The narrow sandy isthmus, first so-named, became The Old Neck.

The Neck was the first significant settlement on Stewart Island after the Codfish Island sealers' settlement of the 1820's. Seamen and whalers who settled there married Maori wives, and in 1844 thirteen families with twenty-eight children had their home there. At that time there were only ten families in Halfmoon Bay with eleven children, not closely settled as at the Neck but one here, one there, in their bays.

### FROM RUAPUKE TO THE NECK

The Ruapuke Native School opened in 1868 but soon afterwards Ruapuke people began to move to The Neck. There were several reasons, but the main attraction was the land that had been promised since 1864. With all its advantages Ruapuke lacked good harbours, a necessity for sea-going men. Perhaps that too was one of the reasons why The Neck settlement did not last. How often we have had to get away from there in a hurry!

Between 1868-73 The Neck population increased rapidly and in 1873 the Stewart Island Grants Act became law. It granted ten acres to each eligible male and eight acres to each eligible female. But much of the land granted was poor or heavily bushed and of little immediate value.

The men were fishermen on whale-ships, a few working at the sawmills far away from their homes. There were times when there wasn't an able man on The Neck. The women took over. On one sad occasion, a child having died, they had to dig the grave and conduct the burial. As in other isolated places they helped each other at child-birth. When a few sheep were introduced they learnt to care for them and at least two girls I knew, in later years, had become expert at slaughtering. It wasn't by choice but necessity. They hoed the potatoes, prepared the kelp-bags for the mutton-bird season, snooded hooks and mended nets.

They also sang well. There could be others, but I remember especially the Potiki family, Hilda, Bob, Jacob and Tamai, and the beauty of their voices.



**Miss Margaret S. PASLEY**

(later Mrs Tom Bragg),

**SOLE TEACHER 1906-1908**



**Mr and Mrs A. W. TRAILL**

(nee Miss Gretchen Wohlers)

**and Miss Etta Traill**



## THE NECK SCHOOL 1875-1915

In 1875 a room in the home of Manuel Goomes, (de Gomez) a Portuguese settler from the Cape de Verde Islands, was offered as a school room. This settler and Dennison (or Yankee) Smith, who married sisters, were the two families who subsequently peopled Bravo Island in Paterson Inlet.

## FIRST TEACHER APPOINTED 1875

In March 1875 Mr A. W. Traill from the Orkney Islands, who was agent and catechist for the Presbytery of Otago and Southland, agreed to undertake, as well, the duty of school teacher.

A school house and residence were built on a ten acre block of land given by Manuel Goomes. In return for his land he asked for a block of land of equivalent value. The worthless ten acre block on Native Island, Paterson Inlet, which he received, has always seemed to me to be poor compensation for his generosity.

## MAXIMUM ROLL NUMBER IN 1879

By 1879 the average school attendance was thirty. Mr Traill was a diligent and kindly teacher and was ably assisted by his wife Gretchen who was the only daughter of the Ruapuke missionary the Rev. J. F. H. Wohlers.

## DECLINE OF POPULATION AT THE NECK

With the gradual decline of population the average attendances from 1875-1901 was twenty-seven. In 1902 it fell to fifteen and slowly came to a stand-still. The school was closed permanently in 1915. A list of The Neck teachers is appended.

Many yarns could be told of those Neck children and their valiant mothers, especially by ex-pupils still in our midst.

One gala day for the women and children was when an Assyrian hawker arrived on a cutter and laid out all his gear on the beach: Reels of cotton, soap, wool, packets of pins and needles, knitting needles, violet powder, bottles of painkiller and some materials, like print, galatea and red flannel. And "Nize Comb?" he used to ask. All colours the combs were, so gay, but as one mother said "I didn't need to spend on that. I had my bone comb carved for me by my father when I was a girl and it did all my children too".



### HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL — ABOUT 1900

*Back Row:* Vic Thomson, Alex Johnson, Jim Robertson, Violet Thomson, Mr. Peterson, Isa Hicks, Polly Naismith, Annie Hicks, Edie Harrison, Nell Johnson (at back), Emily Thomson, Bertha Traill (from Australia), Ethel Cox, Edwin Traill, Alf Leask,

*Front Row:* Violet Johnson, Mary Pollock, Olive Hansen, Alfred Cox, Bill Traill, Nell Robertson, Hilda Smith, Bert Rein, Kate Thomson, Gladys Thomson, Ethel Hicks, Hazel Smith, Bob Hicks, Charlie Traill





### **STEWART ISLAND FOOTBALL CLUB EARLY 1900's**

*Back Row:* Bob Deacon, Bob Chirnside, Dick Lloyd, Henry Hansen, Clem Eade, Alf Hansen, M. Matthews, Nay Bragg

*Middle Row:* Tom Bragg, J. Patterson, J. Reid, George Fife, Maurice Topi

*Front Row:* Fred Topi, Carroll Hansen, F. Belsham, Jacob King, A. Steans



### **TOM LEASK'S HOME IN LEASK'S BAY**

Where Mr Peterson first taught school in 1874 until the school was built in Halfmoon Bay.

Mrs Dinah Leask, Rosa Leask, Mrs Caroline Leask and child, Mrs Mary Jensen, and in front Lena Jensen and Edgar Jensen.



### HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL 1907

Back Row: Eddie Young, Len Bowers, Gordon Traill, Jack Deacon, Sydney Frazer, Arthur Harrison,

Bert Bowers, Basil Cox, John Wast

Second Row: Maceen Leask, Netta Bowers, Lizzie Widdowson, Ivy Widdowson, Kathleen Frazer, Lena Jensen,

Maggie Irwin, Lena Wast, Ida Cox, Maggie Hicks

Third Row: Ettie Ramsay, Allie Roff, Allie Ridman, Jean Ramsay, Ursula Ramsay, Maud Hardwick, Ruby Thomson

Fourth Row: Eric Leask, Hine Wast, Mary Thomson, Sheila Bowers, Olga Jensen, Tom Wast, George Leask

## PLAYING SEALS

At school, at playtime, one of the games the Neck children loved was "Playing Seals".

The bell rang and they all ran and settled in their desks. After a while the teacher noticed that one boy was missing "Where's Billy?". It took some time to worm the answer out of them. "He's the seal!"

And he was, sure enough, and still dangling on a rope well over the cliff. That cliff at The Neck must be all of sixty feet high and sheer at that. When teacher and "sealers" hauled the "seal" up all he said was "Please Sir, I didn't hear the bell".

## THE NECK SCHOOL, STEWART ISLAND 1875-1914

### Teachers

Arthur W. Traill	March 1875 - 88
(Rev.) Charles Connor	1888 - 93
John Samuel Von Tunzleman	1894 - 98
(During his illness his daughter Lucy and his son Jack relieved for three months).	
J. H. Thompson	1898 - 02
M. Burns	1903 - 05
W. M. Millar	1906 - 08
Carl O. Reichel	1908
Rebecca Spencer	1909 - 10
Herbert Wright	1911 - 13
James D. Simpson	1913 - 14

- School closed 30 November, 1914 -





## HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL 1915

*Teachers at Back:* Mrs A. Gregg and Miss Jessie Hamilton.

*Back Row:* Bill Jackson, Norman Double, Bill Martin, Julius Jensen, Loren Carstensen, Willie Thomson (Winkie), Bill Phillips,

Bill Medder, Joe Carstensen, Edwin Hamilton, Alex Martin

*Second Row:* Owen Bragg, Vic Bragg, Charlie Hicks, Bill Hamilton, Ronnie Hansen, Clara Carstensen, Daisy Pollock, Mamie Harrison, Tessie Medder,

Maggie Thomson, Molly Pollock, Grace Phillips, Herbie Hansen

*Third Row:* Sanford Leask, Annie Nelson, Betty Somerville, Nellie McDonald, Bessie Hicks, Edith Double, Isla McDonald, Eileen Medder,

Nella Robertson, Eva Lloyd, Blanche Martin

*Fourth Row:* Teenie Jackson, Winnie Thomson, Reitha Lloyd, Maggie Jackson, Jean Ramsay, Ethel Double, Dorrie Hansen, Alice Lloyd, Violet Pollock,

Maggie Phillips, Lorna Lloyd, Eileen Harrison

*Front Row:* Ron Von Tunzelman, Rangt Bragg, Norman Jensen, Geoff Lloyd, Ted Hicks, Eric Hill, Donald McDonald, Archie Johnson

## MAORI BEACH

The third school to open, (but by this time The Neck school was closed) was a Household School at Maori Beach, some six miles by bush and coastal track from Halfmoon Bay.

On old maps, Maori Beach is called Wooding Bay. It is a fine sweeping stretch of beach to the East of Port William. Peter's Point, the South point of Maori Beach was the home of Peter Garrotty who settled there in 1868. He had the whole point cleared and gardens established. To sweeten the acid soil he burnt shell to make lime at Port Adventure. Strawberry plants must have excellent survival qualities, for you will still find them there. Peter supplied fresh vegetables to the whaling vessels of his day, a "must" for the whalers.

### SITE OF MAORI KAIK

Maori Beach was the site of a Maori Kaik which may have dated back to very early times. In 1844 its native population was thirty-two, and twelve of these were children. Seven years later only twelve natives remained. Gradually it was deserted, and little is known of the settlement.

### SAWMILL OPENS, 1913 AND SCHOOL, 1920

In 1913 a sawmill, "The Last of the Mohicans" as it was called, started milling at Maori Beach. When it closed eighteen years later milling was over at Stewart Island.

By 1920 there were enough children to warrant applying to the Southland Education Board for a teacher. Luckily two large families, the Hawkins and Watson families, were living there. This made a school possible, and in 1920 Miss Annie McAngus started teaching.

In 1921 Mrs Maria (called Minnie) Leask took over. No sooner had she landed than a man launching a heavy punt called out "Give us a shove". She said she ruined her town shoes and was eaten alive by sandflies, but she stuck to it for two years.

At first the weekly school holiday was on Wednesday. This was boat day at Halfmoon Bay, the old Theresa Ward. The children would walk up from Maori Beach with the orders from the families and the mill. The stores were packed: groceries bread and meat, the mail and papers collected and Bob Williamson in the Mareno took children and all, back home to Maori Beach.

Mrs Leask had the holiday changed to Saturday. This enabled her to spend the weekend in Halfmoon Bay with her young son Tom. She had been left a widow with two sons. Roy the younger was cared





## HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL 1921

**Back Row:** Ted Hicks, George Wilkinson, Jack Hamilton, Donald MacDonald, Stanley Heaton, Dave Thomson, Ron Hansen, Bob Watson,  
 Rangj Bragg, Bruce Mackie, Norman Jensen  
**Second Row:** Irene Caarstensen, Sheila Wilkinson, Myrtle Watson, Maisie Johnson, Grace Phillips, Mamie Harrison, Ina Mackie, Bessie Hicks,  
 Molly Pollock, Rita Pollock, Mona Johnson, Louie Phillips  
**Third Row:** Muriel Hicks, Gladys Watson, Pamela (Girlie) Bragg, Winnie Johnson, Jean Hamilton, Evie Carstensen, Isabel Hamilton, Ruby Hunter,  
 Beryl Harrison, Jean Phillips  
**Fourth Row:** Bill Robertson, Cedric Doak, Quin Hamilton, Bill Dawson, Arthur Marshall, Jimmy Phillips, Violet Cosgrove, Myra Wilkinson,  
 Thelma Topi, Phyllis Watson, Neta Bragg, Betty Hamilton  
**Front Row:** Frank Doak, Rodney Bragg, Bert Hicks, Tim Pollock, Lou Bragg, Palmer Hamilton, Sam Dawson, Ivan Doak



for by her parents the Simons at Myross Bush, Southland, and Tom by the John Leask's of Leask's Bay. The Southland Education Board was noted for its thoughtful co-operation with its sole teachers in remote areas.

Such teachers were often called on to do much more than teach. Most of them had a good knowledge of first aid, "and just as well because I'm the Doctor too" said one.

At Maori Beach, when one of the mill-men died, the teacher was asked to do the laying-out. In the dead man's "heart pocket" she found a picture, in a worn leather folder, of his island-sweetheart of fifty years before. I treasure that picture, and the iron heart (an ironing stand) which he forged for her in Scollay's Smiddy in the 80's. She married Hans, not Davey.

#### SCHOOL CLOSED TEMPORARILY 1923-24

For eighteen months the school was closed. Then in 1924 Miss Ursula McKenzie was appointed, and with her came her brother for company, and to attend school there. Never under-estimate the power of your school day's environment. Perhaps it was Maori Beach that had an influencing hand in giving us the present Director of the Southland Museum, Arthur McKenzie, that small boy who went to Maori Beach "for company".

Stewart Island must be good ground for Museum interests, for two more of its school children became Museum Directors, Mrs Eileen Willa (Eileen Harrison) of the local Rakiura Museum, and the writer. Maybe it was because we could always bone up on bones. They came up to meet us after the wind had tossed up the sand dunes: whale bones, bird-bones, fish-bones, kuri-bones and even human-bones, all beautifully bleached and just begging to be studied and admired.

#### MILL CLOSED 1931, SCHOOL CLOSED 1935

Although the mill closed in 1931 the depression years, some of the mill families remained, the men to go fishing (the old standby). The school did not finally close till four years later. Frank Chisholm was then the teacher.

A list of Maori Beach teachers is appended.

#### STEWART ISLAND'S PIED PIPER

Because of Maori Beach, Stewart Island had its Pied Piper.

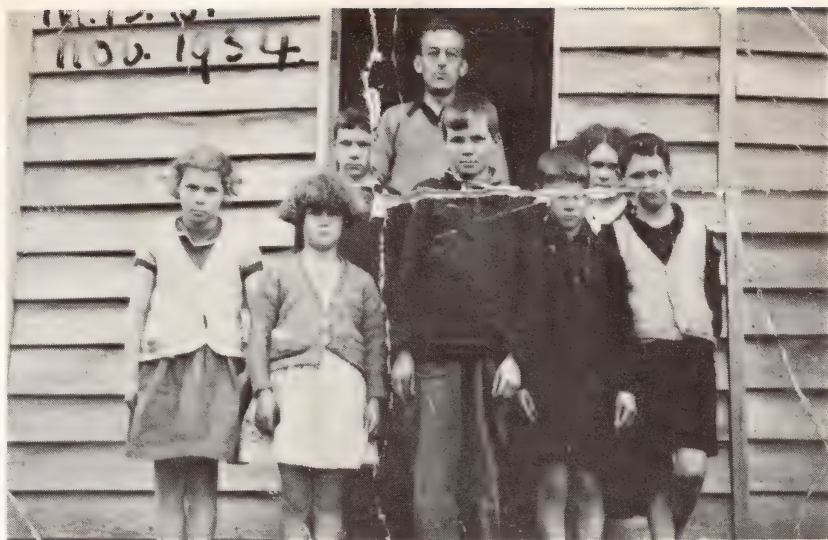
Halfmoon Bay school children of the 30's still have happy memories of a Maori Beach man who was their idea of the Pied Piper.



### MISS PASLEY'S PUPILS — GROUP AT 60th JUBILEE, 1934

Back Row: Messrs. Jim Robertson, Edgar Jensen, Arthur Harrison, Roy Traill  
 Middle Row: Mr Robert C. Hicks, Mrs Tolson (Neill Robertson), Mrs M. Topi (Olive Hansen), Mr Vic Thomson, Mrs Chilton (Annie Thompson),  
 Mrs Sansom (Olga Jensen)  
 Front Row: Mrs J. Robertson (Maggie Irwin), Mrs McNatty (Ursie Ramsay), Mrs Watson (Dorrie Back), Mrs McKendry (Ettie Ramsay),  
 Mrs T. Bragg (Margaret Pasley), Mrs Stirling (Lena Jensen), Mrs A. Traill (Mateen Leask), Mrs S. Smith (Lena Wast)





### **MAORI BEACH SCHOOL, NOVEMBER 1934**

Teacher: Mr Brown, Rata Hawkins, Betty Hawkins, Jack Hawkins, Ted Hawkins, Clarence Hawkins, Eileen Hawkins, Les Hawkins



### **HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL SENIOR CLASS 1929**

*Back Row:* Thelma Kissell, Phyllis Watson, John Tolson, Lewis Dawson, Noel Robertson, Arthur Woodley, Bert Johnson, Ethel Hicks

*Middle Row:* Elsa Hicks, Stuart Robertson, Ken Johnson, Athol Pollock, Joan Mackellar, Vera McCrystal, Cecil Fife, Leslie Thomson, Russell Smith

*Front Row:* Cath Mackellar, Nellie Hamilton, Roma Smith, Bill Hicks, Fred Watson, Sybil Smith, Colin Stirling, Martin Bragg, Lesley Trill



But his music was more exciting, with a more enticing come-hither note. "Old Tobias" didn't play the flute. He jangled the pennies in his pocket and threw them away.

When "Old Tobias" left the store and Post Office of a boat-day, his load of stores on his back, to tramp back the six miles to Maori Beach he first got rid of all unnecessary weight. The pennies and half pennies all went.

Sometimes he tossed them up like a lolly scramble, sometimes he slyly dropped them by dribs and drabs. The children followed "Old Tobias", stuck to him like glue.

On one occasion the school bell had rung, but Old Tobias tramped on without a backward glance. Not a coin seemed forthcoming. Just as the "stream" sadly turned tail (in case of the cuts!) down they came. A whole big handful plopped in the mud. And not only pennies, some "white money" as well.

When "Old Tobias" died Mr Russell Hosie of Invercargill called on me and offered me the title deeds of "Old Tobias's" block of land at Maori Beach for a very small sum. My paths were no longer on the island and sadly I refused.

One does not need to hold the title deeds in one's safe to "own" land however. The familiar island places, loved by a hundred year's worth of school children, are surely "owned" by a great host of Stewart Islanders. A few are present, but most of them are far away, and of long ago.

"Man, vetch and rye all to the seasons yield  
While I lie here still the same smiling field"

#### MAORI BEACH SCHOOL, STEWART ISLAND 1920-1935

##### Teachers

Annie McAngus	1920 - 21
(Mrs) Maria E. Leask	1921 - 23
(School closed 31.1.23 to 19.6.24: No teacher)	
Ursula McKenzie	1924 - 27
Colin Eric Taverner	1927 - 29
Robert Esmond McAra	1929 - 30
Douglas Joseph Grindlay	1930 - 32
Gavin Foster Brown	1932 - 34
Frank Chisholm	1934 - 35

- Household School opened 15 July 1920
- closed 31 January 1935



### **Mrs GREGG'S PUPILS — GROUP AT 60th JUBILEE, 1934**

**Back Row:** Messrs. George Bragg, John Goodman, Bill Hicks, Quentin Hamilton, Bill Dawson, Cecil Fife, Palmer Hamilton, Martin Bragg, Cyril Hicks, Fred Watson

**Middle Row:** Ken Johnson, Chum Ramsay, Mrs Davis (Pamela Bragg), Arthur Marshall, Mrs Jardine (Sheila Wilkinson), Jim Fife, Alf Topi, Bill Robertson, Lewis Dawson, Eric Dawson, John Tolson, George Hicks, Rodney Bragg, Russell Smith  
**Front Row:** Mrs Gregg (Teacher), Mrs O. Wiig (Eunice Harrison), Mrs Cantrick (Isabel Hamilton), Mrs Sheddan (Mona Johnson), Mrs E. Bragg (Ethel Hicks), Mrs T. Nilsen (Beryl Harrison), Mrs Benzie (Betty Hamilton), Mrs Fisher (Nellie Hamilton), Mrs K. Bradshaw (Elsa Hicks), Mrs J. Mullen (Anne Heaton), Mrs Rangt Bragg (Muriel Hicks), Mrs McMillan (Irene Carstensen)





## HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL 1935

Back Row: Mr Alf Farrant, Walter Harrison, Elva Wast, Joan Braxton, Kate Tolson, Phyllis Bragg, Nancy Fife, Winnie Topi, Margaret Oswald,

Celia Smith, Hazel Hicks, Betty Hamilton, Ted Hawkins, Hector Dawson, Alvin Hicks

Second Row: Rena Dawson, Joe Hamilton, Billy Oswald, Dolly Walscott, Avis Young, Koara Bragg, Marjorie Traill, Sheila Traill, Elsa Sloan,

Judy Smith, Betty Hawkins, Rata Hawkins, Lloyd Young, Charlie Whipp, Miss Major

Third Row: Cam. Hamilton, Betty Bragg, Dulcie Young, Bob Armstrong, Athol Watson, Denny Smith, Tane Dawson, Freddie Shannon, Clarence Hawkins, Peter McKellar, Henry Whipp, Peter Topi, Jimmy Bragg, Ross Carstensen, Bob Hicks, Albert Whipp, Alex Traill, Alfie Farrant,

George Bragg, Harold Thomson

Fourth Row: Jim Whipp, Roger Bragg, Solveig Askerud, Nancy Traill, Hughina Armstrong, Dorothy Oswald, Noeline Carstensen, Fay Wast,

Rima Bragg, Joyce Campbell, Colleen Armstrong, Peggy Jensen, Dorothy Armstrong, Clarice Young, Marion Hicks, Ngairi —,

Pac Striland, Billy Bragg, Les Hawkins



## THE SEA WAS ALSO OUR "SCHOOL"

Most of us were fishermen's children. Without our knowing it, our education owed a terrific lot to the sea.

The Sawmills (1861-1931) made impact, but fishing never failed. An islander's life was the sea, and how could a child resist it? The sea with all its beaches was a book illustrated. Not an open book though. Devious!

We lived on fish and potatoes. And the vigour of our parents. Did the fresh salt air so cool and moist in those days give them verve? They were always busy, peppery at times and it was good for us. We had to do what we were told.

School children weren't cosseted or sheltered much. They were expected to pull their weight, even if they didn't have such a lot. "Gimme a hand", "Take that bailer and keep it going". We must often have been in their way, but we never knew it. We gave it a go and felt taller because we had been needed to haul up a dinghy or bail it out, when it was leaking, as it usually was.

When a boy hitched his first school bag on his back - a proud occasion - he at once became "A Little Man". Every fisherman whistled and all the boys too, in a way that has completely vanished from the world.

## THE LEAVEN - CHARLES TRAILL OF ULVA

Someone once said to me "There must have been someone, a scientist perhaps, who started the earliest island children going on plants and shells and things". There was. It was Charles Trill of Ulva. He came to the island in 1871 and for twenty one years till his death, answered the eager questions: "What shell is this?" "Is this a fern or a moss"? They brought him "rare" plants, they started collections of shells. So their children became observers and questioners too.

## FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

It was the sea that was alive. Our fishermen fathers brought home any fish that puzzled them, "Looked queer" as they would say. We children pored over them and from the cleanings of the groper and cod we got the lovely deep-water shells.

On our way to school we would keep a sharp eye on the beaches, so often strewn with "riddles" thrown up by the tide during the night. But it was, when we could dawdle along on the way home, by way of the beaches and rocks, instead of the track, that we had most fun.



### HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL SENIOR ROOM, Stds 3 and 4 and Forms I and II 1950

*Back Row:* Geoffrey Norman, Keith Squires, Ian Leask, Bill Hamilton, Barry Hamilton, Carl Wast,  
Joseph Carstensen, Colin Neilsen, Mr E. W. Squires

*Middle Row:* Christieann Hicks, Maureen Skipper, Lorraine Bailey, Ellen Bragg, Jennifer Squires, Fay Hamilton,  
Astrid Eriksson, June Bragg, Donal Duthie

*Front Row:* Margaret Neilsen, Wendy Bradshaw, Yvonne Fife, Ngaire Armstrong, Wendy Hamilton, Antony Pollock,  
Stuart Macdonald, Kevin Bragg, George Wast, Owen Eriksson

*Absent:* Shirley Hawkins, Ian Johnson



### NECK SCHOOL GROUP 85th YEAR JUBILEE, 1959

*Back:* Tamai Kingi Potiki, Buddie Willa, Hine Wixon

*Front:* Ellen Wixon, Rebecca Spencer (Teacher), George Fife, Manny Wixon

## THE SHIPS

The ships that came and went were a continuous talking-point. One ship from across the world moored in the bay almost outside the school and stayed for several months. The two children, who came ashore to school every morning, didn't have a hair out of place, Kathleen's gorgeous thick curls and Willie's smooth top. We, who had walked miles round the coast, felt like scarecrows. But their mother envied ours. She wanted to live ashore and have a garden.

It was in the first half of the school's century that the ships made history. Change had to come. A look at some of the ships that were at Stewart Island in 1874, the year that school days began there, will give some idea of seafaring then, compared with the vessels children see today.

### A SEAMAN'S DIARY 1874

From an old diary, kept at Port William in 1874-75, here are some snippets; the first because, from this immigrant ship, the island gained two early settlers.

"January 1874: The full rigged ship Surat with 271 immigrants was wrecked, through negligence, at the Catlins. All hands, but in great distress, got ashore".

Marie and Louis Robert and their child from St Malo, France were the island settlers.

"March 1874: Wrecked at last, the schooner Mary Van Every 41 tons on the bar at the Molyneux, after more than one near-go".

The Mary Van Every was built by McPhee at Kaipipi for John Bullock, Sawmill Owner of the 60's and named after his wife. His own nameship John Bullock, a 3 masted schooner was also built there. School children will find the site today at Kaipipi above a beach strewn with bits of rusty iron and broken "black-jacks" or "square-faces". It is on the North side of the first arm running to Westward. In the bush above, a well made pit from the pit sawing days is of interest. A boat is necessary to visit the site. But children can walk to the old bullock track at Kaipipi.

"May 1874: The Government Cutter Champion came and was handed over to Captain Greig, Coastmaster here".

"July 1874: Schooner Mary Jane from Riverton came in and anchored for the night. She is bound for the Auckland Islands with 31 sheep and 4,000 ft. of timber. Two passengers Mr Ivn and a female".

"November 1, 1874: Schooner Circe 145 tons - George Priest, Master, from Moeraki with a cargo of stone, put in here, Windbound".



Now George Priest an Englishman was one of the Halfmoon Bay School's pioneer committee men of 1874. His own boat the Rakou, his "home", was moored inside Peterson's Nugget. He was oystering in the Rakou and took on a new mate. One day the mate came in without George Priest. "Fell overboard" he said, No-one believed it. The "mate" and the Rakou sailed away. And George Priest's name no longer appears in the minutes.

#### TOM CROSS AND THE FLYING SCUD

Tom Cross and the 20 ton cutter Flying Scud are often mentioned, how "Tom tells of some strange ships he has towed into Bluff"; and "Tom Cross in the Flying Scud along with the Rosa Cutter came in from South Cape with 23,000 muttonbirds". That was May, 1875.

I have never known why one of today's fishing fleet is not called the Flying Scud. It seems a perfect name for a working boat.

Amongst all her exploits, it was this small cutter and Tom her skipper that made the epic trip to the Auckland Islands in 1865 to rescue the two men left behind from the wreck of the Grafton, Cape Musgrave. Tom found them living on opposite sides of the island, "couldn't stand each other".

The Flying Scud did lesser as well as greater things. She also brought a "Kow" to Stewart Island.

Mr Peterson kept the receipt.

"H.M. Bay - June 21, 1877

Reseved from Misses Bowers the some of one pound ten shillings freight upon one kow from Bluff to Stewart Island on behalf of Peatersson

Signed Thomas Cross"

Take heart. He was no hand at spelling, but he saved lives.

Underneath the receipt Mr Peterson has written:

"Calf of 1877 Bessie died June 1899, twenty two years".

I can't tell you all the entries. Some are salty, but all are pithy. Here are some other ships which called in. School children can find out about them:

Sarah Pile, Good Templar, Eliza Adams, Chance, Lagoda, Tamerlane, Splendid and Maid of Otago.

This will be the last:

"The Matilda Sayers 231 tons Captain Childs with a crew of 28 men came in today, 18 months out and with 10 tuns of sperm oil".

This American whaler, frequently at the Island, was implicated in a smuggling story of those years. But it wasn't silver candlesticks this time that the Captain gave Uncle Lonneker. It was an innocent gift. You can see it today.

"Cider gums and Giant Blue Gums" he said as he handed out a box of seeds from Australia.

Successive generations of school children have seen Lonnekers gums grow. Today they are the "giants" the Captain promised.

## IMPACT OF THE SEA—BOAT BUILDING

The island's ship builders, of early days, always had a boat on the stocks, in 1875, five in Halfmoon Bay and Paterson Inlet.

Captain Bob Scollay's Slipway right beside the school, and the warmth and flying sparks of his smiddy were a great attraction. Boat after boat slid down the skids. School children were there at the launching of the Sunbeam, his last boat. Her "bones" lay for many years, along with those of the Belle and the Little Rakiura, on the beach at Thule, and may still be there. Old ships "persist".

### TIMBER BOATS

Cutters such as the Prospector and the Crest of the Wave came in for timber, followed by the Coastal Steamers going to Kaipipi to load up: the Invercargill, Kotare, Rose Casey, Dorset, the broad beamy Rimu, and the Loyalty, they often called in to the Halfmoon Bay wharf, no distance from the school. On all these, and all the local boats, school children had to keep an eye! Even in the bay and at their moorings, boats could be tossed about like chips of wood.

Subjects for "compositions" or "essays" as they were called, were in line. One girl wrote "Tom Bragg and the Kekenos were born in the same year, 1876". How right she was. He used to say they were twins.

### IMPACT OF ANTARCTIC EXPLORERS

It was the eskimo dogs at Ringa Ringa that made several generations of school children talk about the Antarctic.

When the 521 ton barque-rigged vessel Southern Cross came from England to the Antarctic she had ninety dogs from Greenland and Siberia on board, kennels too and all their gear. They were a joy and a nuisance because thirty one men also had to move around. Some of the dogs "took to" certain men and became their pets, but other dogs "took to" some of the men in quite a different way.

When the Southern Cross returned in 1900 Mr Arthur Traill took care of the few dogs that were left, rather than see them destroyed.

The Ringa Ringa dogs, white, docile and plume-tailed were a great attraction, samoyeds no doubt.

"You can buy a dog, but you can't buy the wag of his tail" we used to be told.





### SENIOR ROOM 1960

*Back Row:* Shona Wast, Joyce Wast, Marilyn Smith, Gail Wast, Susan Hamilton, Ross Nilsen, Robert Henderson, Mervyn Carstensen, Mr Maguire

*Second Row:* Janet Henderson, Helen Smith, Allan Pollock, Maui Fife, Russell Squires, Alister Johnson

*Third Row:* Graham Hicks, Allan Dawson, Lynette Whipp, Olaf Nilsen, Michael Hamilton, Noel Hicks, Simon Goomes, Bruce Wast, Russell Dawson, Arthur Dawson, Kevin Edwards

*Front Row:* David Greenem, Alf Leask, Stewart Smith, Johnny Goodman, Joy Leask, Brya Randell, Colleen Whipp, Linda Squires



### INFANT ROOM CLASSES 1960

*Back Row:* Martin Fife, Richard Squires, Kenneth Johnson, Colin Hopkins, John Randell, Daisy Wast, Elaine Dawson, Eric Dawson, Mr Worrall

*Middle Row:* Larry Wixon, Ivan Pollock, Colin Johnson, Maurice Nicol, Jocelyn Draisey, Kevin Whipp, Fay Hicks, Michael Wixon

*Front Row:* Fern Neave, Michelle Squires, Gloria Goodman, Cheryl Greenem, Veronica Leask, Ethel Leask, Pearl Hicks, Paul Squires

## THE NIMROD AND CAPTAIN SHACKLETON

It is the Nimrod and Captain Shackleton, of all the Antarctic Ships, that we chiefly remember. Was it all those years ago that the whole school trooped down the wharf to welcome him? I can still see his face - tired he looked - and hear the sudden if somewhat ragged cheer we gave him. But when he talked to us his whole face lit up.

## NORWEGIAN WHALERS 1924-1936

The Norwegian Whale fleet with its spry little "Chasers" and the big mother ships, first the Sir James Clarke Ross and then the C. A. Larsen, gave children a taste of another way of life.

When they visited the ships, with parents or teachers, there was much to marvel at. The children were always received with great courtesy, I'm sure we learnt much from the Norwegians. Good manners was not the least important subject.

To be invited for a meal was an eye-opener. We had never eaten raw fish before. The cheese was spiced, the coffee scalding, clear and strong and with it you could nibble loaf sugar. The rye bread was nutty and delicious. The boys drew sketches of the "chasers" and mother ship at every angle or tried to.

"Boats! always boats! why can't you draw something else?" a teacher complained.

In the early school days some of these school boys were men. They felt as if they had roosted too long ashore, on a desk. They needed to struggle with a few toppling green waves instead of grammar.

## THE SEA AND FORMAL EDUCATION

At Stewart Island, alongside the formal education of the classroom, there was and always will be, the impact of the sea and life connected with it.

This is certainly in line with the discussions today. We are concerned with "broadening the base" of the formal education in the schools.

Education is not merely acquiring enough basic information to "earn a living". Some knowledge of the whole environment is essential to live adequately in today's and tomorrow's world.



## HALFMOON BAY SCHOOL WAS FORTUNATE IN ITS TEACHERS

The school has been singularly fortunate in its teachers. No two were alike. Several married into the Island. The first three women teachers were all caught in this net and others have followed them, almost, one could say, without a struggle.

Our teachers were Miss Margaret Sabine Pasley (Mrs Tom Bragg) and Mrs Annie Reid (Mrs George Gregg). From the distance of some sixty years we still recall their enthusiasm. They were never too busy nor too tired to teach us, nor to listen, although we children did most of the listening. And that was only as it should be.

### THE MAYPOLE DANCE

We must have tried their patience, for our thoughts were never wholly on school-work. When holidays came we could toss the whole school off with our schoolbags.

But Miss Pasley still had the heart to involve us all in a Maypole Dance. We had absolutely no ballet graces. Climbing trees, jumping rocks and shinning up the mast of any boat lying on the beach, was about our limit. Bare feet certainly we didn't lack, but the boys wore clod-hoppers in the winter and some of the girls clomped along in them too. But Miss Pasley never berated us with the "clumsy" we deserved. Frequently she blushed, but she saw only the graceful way of the dance, and the great moment arrived eventually.

Round an old ship's mast for the Maypole, we circled, before the eyes of our anxious parents. They had made the white dresses ("No! cream will not do I'm afraid; it must be white"); and the white shirts for the boys. (What boy ever had a white shirt before that?) Our red and blue sashes floated out, while the red, white and blue streamers twined and twisted into surprising patterns on the mast. We were warned not to look up, in case of losing step or colliding, but we glanced slantingly upwards and felt that our mothers need not be so anxious about us. We weren't upsetting the pattern, as they feared. The Maypole Dance was what we called a howling success.

### MRS GREGG AND MISS HAMILTON

Mrs Gregg was a commanding figure, brisk, cheerful and forthright. Her assistant Jessie Hamilton, a gentle Scottish girl, was tiny. They became life-long friends and Jessie became the "daughter" that the Greggs longed for, but never had.

Nicknames have always been apt at the Island from the days of Larrikin Tom, Wild Bill to the days of Johnny Gum Boots. So it was inevitable that, when the two teachers came walking down to



school together, and might "catch up" on us, that Norman said "Hurry up! Here comes the Mollymawk and the Tikky-Tar". (Tikky-Tar" was our pronunciation of the Maori name for the white fronted tern, a bird of slender build and graceful flight). The names stuck, and both teachers in later years chuckled over them at times.

Both these teachers as I said, married Islanders, in both cases, men of the sea.

#### MRS MYRA LEASK

Another teacher Myra Gosling (Assistant 1944-48) who also married "into the Island" and is still a resident, has always been closely connected with the school. Throughout the years she has consistently taken the Bible lesson at the school when no Minister was available.

#### ORIGINAL SCHOOL -- METHOD

You would go past the open school window and glance in. What is going on? Jack, the teacher is up on the table, cricket bat in position, demonstrating the strokes.

The same teacher grew tired of children mumbling when they were reading.

"Take your journal. Now go down to the wharf, face the school and read to us. We'll all be at the school door to listen to you".

This speech-therapy across water worked well, although no-one could make out a word of it.

#### SPRING FLOWER SHOW

Every spring for many years now, the school children have taken part in a flower show, under the leadership of Mrs Frank Rawle and her committee. Mrs Rawle (Netta Bragg), a daughter of the second teacher, has been generous in her support of the school. Her deep rooted affection for the Island and Islanders is apparent, and the stimulus.

Many memories of past teachers are awakened at a School Centenary. An appended list will serve to bring them to the surface.

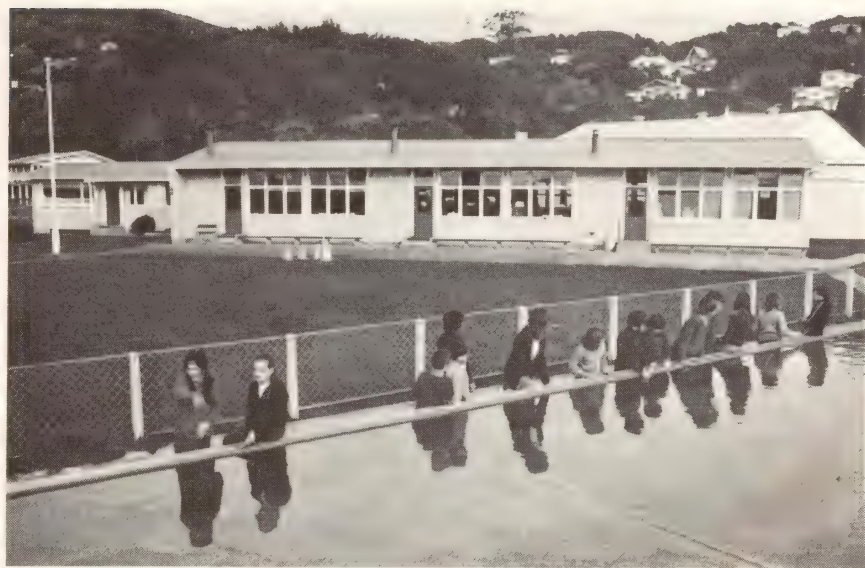
# TEACHERS AT HALF MOON BAY SCHOOL, STEWART ISLAND

Head Teacher	William Peterson	1874 - 1906
Head Teacher	Margaret T. Pasley	1906 - 1908
Head Teacher	(Mrs) Annie Gregg (Reid)	1908 - 1927
Assistant	Jessie Hamilton	1913 - 1929
Head Teacher	George D. Ashton	1927 - 1930
Assistant	Muriel A. Finnie	1929 - 1933
Head Teacher	Alfred E. Farrant	1930 - 1935
Assistant	Marietta Major	1934 - 1936
Head Teacher	John K. Calder	1935 - 1943
Assistant	Jean F. Marshall	1936 - 1939
Assistant	Anna E. J. Collins	1939 - 1940
Assistant	Ellen S. Sproule	1940 - 1943
Head Teacher	Ernest W. Calverley	1941 - 1945
Assistant	Jean F. Marshall	1943 - 1944
Head Teacher	Charles A. Turner	1943 - 1950
Assistant	Myra N. Gosling	1944 - 1948
Assistant	Morris Wilson	1948 - 1949
Assistant	C. P. Coulter	1949 - 1950
Head Teacher	Ernest W. Squires	1950 - 1953
Assistant	(Mrs) Jean F. Adamson (Marshall)	1950 - 1954
Head Teacher	Raymond Swaney	1953 - 1957
Assistant	James A. Aitken	1954 - 1956
Assistant	Elinor M. Annison	1956 - 1960
Head Teacher	J. C. Bryce	1957 - 1958
Head Teacher	John P. McGuire	1958 - 1961
Assistant	William T. Worrall	1960
Head Teacher	John T. Dawson	1961 - 1965
Head Teacher	Brian G. Fowler	1965 - 1969
Relieving Head	Colin J. Garrett	1969
Assistant	Dianne Smith	1969
Head Teacher	L. B. Anderson	1969 -
Relieving Teacher	(Mrs) Julia Anderson	1969
Assistant	Claire Hancox	1970
Assistant	(Mrs) Barbara Wilson	1973
Assistant	Heather Smith	1974 -



### **PRESENT DAY STAFF**

*Left to Right: William Worrall, Heather Smith, Laurie Anderson*



### **PRESENT DAY SCHOOL**



## THE THIRD AND PRESENT SCHOOL

In 1959 this startling heading in a press report caught my eye: Stewart Island School is an "eyesore and disgrace".

Mr A. S. Macdonald, Chairman of the School Committee was urging the replacement of the old school, first mooted, he said, six years before.

I could not picture our school possibly being an "eyesore and disgrace" but then, after a life of seventy five years, it might well be!

The Chairman drove the nail further home. The Celebrations for the 85th Anniversary of the school he said, would have the dubious distinction of being held in a building that included the original class-room of 1874. The island's sixty children were occupying a draughty, ill-lit, dilapidated building, an eyesore to the township and no longer habitable.

Mr J. P. Maguire the Head Teacher told of holes in windows and walls and the rain driving in.

The determination of the Committee with the co-operation of the Southland Education Board and the press had the desired effect.

On Saturday 20 May 1961 the new and present school was declared open by Mr Ian Gough, Senior District Inspector.

### SWIMMING POOL AND LIONS CLUB

Excellent playing areas and a swimming pool are amenities of substantial benefit to the school. The swimming pool required a major effort by many of the Island residents, the best known being the "pedalling publican" George Crack who cycled from North Cape to Halfmoon Bay as a Lions Club project.

The Lions Club has continued to give practical help of many kinds to both the school and the Island.

### RUGBY

It was the late Very Reverend C.J. Tocker, at that time a student for the Presbyterian Ministry, (Stationed at the Island in 1907- 1909) who first bought a football for the school boys and taught them how to play rugby. That was at low tide on the beach in front of the school. A flattie was kept handy to retrieve the ball from the sea.

The present school boys are fortunate in having coaching from Mr Noel Broomhall and Mr Stand Eade. For the first time, the

Stewart Island School Team has reached a standard that allowed them to take part in a seven a side tournament in Invercargill.

#### LOCAL MINISTERS AND DISTRICT NURSES

Both District Nurses and the local Ministers have given voluntary help to the school all through the years, the first nurse in 1911 (Mrs Sarah Sommerville), when the nursing service commenced at Stewart Island.

#### TEACHERS, INSPECTORS, SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND EDUCATION BOARD

Over the century the education of Stewart Island children has been admirably served by teachers of splendid calibre. They have not only used their gifts in teaching the children, but have entered in to the general life of this isolated community with public spirit and zest.

The Southland Education Board has always been most ready to attend to ideas proposed for the welfare of the island school. The Departmental Inspectors have been practical and generous in their advice and encouragement to the teachers.

#### SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Over the years the various members of the School Committees have given unstintingly of their services in the interest not only of the buildings and grounds but of the many and varied teaching aids increasingly required in modern times. Such voluntary service cannot be forgotten on this centenary occasion.

One hundred years of the history of the Stewart Island schools could fill a volume. Only a fragment can be given. But out of it emerges always the faithful service of many people throughout the long years, whether teacher, parent or committee-man. They took a firm grip of their tasks and the Halfmoon Bay school of today is the sequel.

OLGA SANSOM

1 July 1974

## NOTES



NOTES

Ernst Acker (bch).

Daphne Heath (Young). Invercargill  
 Sonja van Koten  
 Magdalena West

June Vincent (Hansen)

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 H 8902



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